

Mixed Wedlock and Its Dangers

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The following Pastoral Letter, addressed to the Catholic laity of the Diocese of Kansas City, was issued on January 6, 1932.

DEAR BRETHREN: The late Cardinal Gibbons, of happy memory, in one of his discourses dwells with deep satisfaction upon the growth of the Catholic Church in the United States. Referring to the causes of the marvelous increase, he states that the addition to the Catholic faith by natural accretion is very considerable. He also points with consolation to the numerous conversions that are every year swelling the ranks of our clergy and laity. But the prepondering cause of our increased Catholic population he ascribes to the tide of immigration from abroad. Closing his discourse, the Cardinal confesses, that candor compels him to admit that the bright picture he has drawn also has its sombre shadows. He says: "In the triumphal march of the hosts of the Lord to the heavenly Jerusalem during the past century, many of the followers have lagged behind, and have fallen by the wayside, and some have ignominiously cast away their armor and joined the forces of the enemy." Among the principal causes to which the losses we have sustained may be ascribed, the distinguished prelate deplores the pernicious effects of mixed marriages as occasions of the loss of faith.

In his encyclical on Christian Marriage (*Arcanum Divinae*, February 10, 1880) Pope Leo XIII sums up the unhappy results of mixed connubials in the following words:

Care must be taken that they do not easily enter into marriage with those who are not Catholics; for when minds do not agree as to the observances of religion, it is scarcely possible to hope for agreements in other things. Other reasons also proving that persons should turn with dread from such marriages are chiefly these: that they give occasion to forbidden association and communion in religious matters; endanger the faith of the Catholic partner; are a hindrance to the proper education of the children; and often lead to a mixing up of truth and falsehood, and to the belief that all religions are equally good.

It is our intention, in this pastoral letter to the faithful of our diocese, to dwell with emphasis upon these words of the great Pontiff and prove their worth by examples from daily life, referring in particular to the dangers and trials to which the Catholic party in mixed wedlock is exposed.

1. Let us consider the case, which is of frequent occurrence, *in which the husband is the non-Catholic and the wife the Catholic. Both are sincere and anxious to live up to their religion.* The ante-nuptial agreement was signed in good faith and the bride's pastor performed the ceremony of marriage. The non-Catholic husband is a member of a sectarian church in which he has been raised. Does he not differ essentially from his Catholic companion in his manner of thinking? What a sense of loneliness must overpower her when time and familiarity with her new mode of life have removed the fatal delusion. When she prays, she prays alone; when she goes to Mass and receives the sacraments, it is alone.

What of the children in this case? How readily they will perceive that a want of harmony exists between the parents in matters of religion. The father attends his church; the mother hers. Naturally, they will conclude that one religion is as good as another, else why should father and mother not attend the same church? Nor can the Catholic parent avert the deplorable consequence. How easily it may happen that the non-Catholic father will take occasion to express his doubts in the mysteries of the Catholic religion, in the Real Presence, the power of priests to forgive sins, the necessity of hearing Mass, the obligation of fast and abstinence, etc. Is it not true, that, notwithstanding the fallacy of his assertions, they will appear formidable to the children? Unable to answer them, they will acknowledge their force and begin to doubt themselves. While this is taking place in their heart, the mother rues the day when she followed her own counsel rather than listen to the admonitions of her parents and the warnings of her Church. Yet this is not the worst light in which a mixed marriage can appear.

2. Take another example, *where the non-Catholic husband is not desirous of carrying out the promises he made before marriage.* He proves to be both insincere and

capricious. He protests that he did not understand the conditions laid down in the ante-nuptial agreement. Otherwise, he would never have subscribed to them. He is obstinate and opposes the instruction of the children in the rudiments of Catholicity and the discharge of their religious duties. Instead of regarding the Church with indifference, he seizes every opportunity to ridicule and oppose it. He insists that the children be sent to a non-Catholic school, where the vital training in their holy religion is entirely lacking. In this atmosphere of indifference to the spiritual needs of the soul at school, as well as open hostility to the faith around the family hearth, the young minds expand without the first principles of religion. And when the time for reflection arrives, and the few first lessons received from the mother in early life come up from the treasures of memory, their passions will have commenced to acquire strength and urge their claim to indulgence. All this seemed impossible in the pleasant days before marriage. But marriage, as experience teaches, has its trials, its delusions and its sufferings. How can the Christian wife bear to see her boys and girls in childhood and maturity strangers to her own religion; to hear them scoff at the Blessed Sacrament and at Mary, the Mother of God; to know that they suspect and hate God's ministers. No surprise, that the poor Catholic will be a stranger to happiness and will sigh for death as the only alleviation of her sufferings, the only rest for her weary soul. Her faltering step, her silvered hair before the prime of life is reached, the broken heart will tell more plainly than words the melancholy tale.

3. It sometimes happens in mixed wedlock that *the non-Catholic husband is totally indifferent in matters of religion*, but disposed to regard the Catholic Church with favor because his wife is a member of that body. No doubt, in this case she will enjoy the greatest liberty in the exercise of her religion. He has frequently gone to Mass. But in his opinion, one religion is as good as another, and he suggests to her one Sunday to return the compliment and attend some other church. If her faith is not strong, she will find it difficult to refuse the invitation. Of course, she has made up her mind not to take part in any exercises, but at the same time she is impelled by a little curiosity. The second and third visit will be followed by less remorse of

conscience, and gradually she cannot resist the whispers in her heart that after all the Church is too severe in opposing the religious tenets of non-Catholics. This is usually the first step in the way of perversion. The work has been begun, and the inevitable result will be indifferentism, if not apostasy.

An indifferent non-Catholic husband is naturally a stranger to the importance of religion. He cannot appreciate the longing of a Catholic heart for the regular attendance at Mass and receiving the sacraments. A Catholic husband will at a great sacrifice locate near a church to enable him and his family to attend to their religious duties. Not so the non-Catholic husband. He is often indisposed to sacrifice worldly interests for his wife's sake, and the result is, that she may be often placed at a distance from the church. At the beginning she bears it in silence. Then gradually her love of the Church grows cold with the lapse of time, till at length she becomes indifferent in affairs of religion.

4. In the cases mentioned above we referred to mixed marriages where the husband is a non-Catholic, the wife a Catholic. But it happens, in many instances, *that the father is a Catholic and the mother a non-Catholic*. It is under these circumstances that the greatest dangers occur to the children. Is it not the mother who during the years of infancy forms and moulds the mind and heart of the child? To do this rightly, in accordance with the mind of the Church, must she not be filled with faith and sufficiently instructed for her position? She may send her children to the Catholic school, to church and catechism, but she cannot give that loving help, that sympathetic encouragement, that ought to be the mother's part in Catholic education. She may see that they go to Mass and the sacraments, but she does not kneel beside them before the Blessed Sacrament. She may hear them say their prayers, but they will not learn as they would from a Catholic mother how a Catholic ought to pray.

But *what will happen if she is opposed to the Catholic faith?* How easy it will be for her in that case to make them what she is herself. What a pity for the unfortunate children! At a time when the deepest and most abiding impressions are usually made, they are constantly in the

society of the mother. How readily a non-Catholic wife can undo the good that her Catholic husband might try to effect during the short time that he is with them.

If, with all the advantages of a Catholic school, of the priest's careful instruction, of daily Catholic prayer and constant example, there are many who turn out poorly, is it surprising that the children will become totally indifferent in religious matters in a half-Catholic family?

Beloved brethren, be convinced that the many dangers, to which we have alluded, are not imaginary, but real. Our illustrious Pontiff Pope Pius XI, now gloriously reigning, says, that "Experience shows, that (in mixed marriages) deplorable defections from religion occur among the offspring." (*Encyclical Casti Connubii* on Christian Marriage, December 31, 1930.)

5. Where there is no union of faith, there can be no union of hearts. Where there is no union of hearts, the very foundation of all true happiness is wanting. And *what is often the final result of mixed wedlock? Divorce!* The Catholic party knows that the step once taken cannot be retraced. But the non-Catholic party, as a rule, believes in the efficacy and validity of the divorce that is granted. He considers himself single and free to marry again. The Catholic woman cannot do so without sacrificing her faith and religion, as long as the non-Catholic party is living. What fate then awaits the Catholic mother? What will become of her children? This one reflection alone should make the Catholic party, before contracting marriage, pause and consider: "He whom I may marry today may forsake me tomorrow."

Objection: No doubt, many Catholics who have contracted marriage with non-Catholics may feel that the result of these unions have not been so bad as we have described. We may be told that there are many families where the non-Catholic father is honorable, just and kind, where he respects the Catholic faith, goes to church with his Catholic wife and will perhaps some day become a member of the Church. They may point to non-Catholic mothers who are loyal to their promises, careful and considerate, whose children are growing up as good Catholics as Holy Church could wish. We readily admit that representations of this nature have their weight and force. We readily agree, and with the

late Cardinal-Archbishop of Baltimore, whom we quoted at the beginning of this pastoral, we openly

acknowledge, that in many cases mixed marriages have been and still are the means of converting to the Faith some persons who otherwise might not have come to the knowledge of the Church. Sometimes the example, the love and prayers of the Catholic member are instrumental in so good a work. Many a pastor in larger congregations could easily point out not a few of the most edifying and prominent members who are the fruit of such wedlocks. Yet it is only to a limited extent. The number of such converts is by no means equal to the number of Catholics who fall away and are lost.

Ante-nuptial Agreement. The views of the Catholic Church in regard to the marriages of Catholics with non-Catholics are very definite and precise. She has pronounced against them in the most explicit manner. When she permits them, it is only for pressing reasons. *She never allows them without exacting certain promises and guarantees*, so as to diminish as far as possible the dangers and the evil consequences. First of all, both the non-Catholic and the Catholic party must solemnly promise in *writing* before the duly authorized priest, that all the children born of their marriage shall be baptized in the Catholic Church, and shall be carefully brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic religion; that the marriage contracted between them is indissoluble, except by death, and that no other marriage ceremony than that by the Catholic priest shall take place. In addition to these, the non-Catholic party promises that he or she will by no means whatsoever hinder or obstruct the Catholic party in the exercise of his or her religion. (Can. 1061.) Moreover, the Catholic party is bound in charity prudently to procure the conversion of the non-Catholic. (Can. 1062.)

These are the solemn promises the Church demands in every case before the priest is permitted to perform the ceremony of marriage. But in order to fulfil them, is it not essential that the parties concerned understand them thoroughly. Is it not reasonable to demand that the non-Catholic party become familiar with the teachings upon which the Catholic party not only stakes his or her salvation, but which regulates the conscience of that party in the fulfillment of his or her religious duties? Such knowledge of Catholic doctrine will be of the greatest importance to the

non-Catholic party in the guidance of the children with whom God may bless their union. A thorough understanding of the mutual obligations of the spouses will be the basis of the future happiness of the family.

We, therefore, order, that in future no dispensation for mixed marriages will be granted, unless the non-Catholic party has taken at least six instructions—that is two instructions each week for a period of three weeks—from the pastor, or a priest delegated by him, on Catholic doctrine as well as on the sacrament of marriage in particular, and the duties connected with the married life. We further recommend and urge the Catholic party to attend these instructions.

We also admonish the Catholic who contemplates marriage with a non-Catholic to call in person and *alone* at the rectory and inform the pastor of his or her intention *at least a month before the marriage*, to the end that proper arrangements may be made for these six instructions.

This regulation will have the force of a diocesan law after its publication in the parish churches and in the chapels of our hospitals and educational institutions on the third Sunday after Epiphany, January 24th, this year.

To some, perhaps, this regulation may appear a little too exacting. It is not, when we consider the increase of mixed marriages, judged by the annual statistics submitted by each pastor at the close of the year. Moreover, a similar course of action has operated in many dioceses for years with most gratifying results.

Marriage, in the mind of the Church, is no mere civil contract, but a holy and sacred institution. How deplorable, therefore, is the conduct of those lukewarm and indifferent members of the Church, who openly defy her laws and *deliberately appear before a civil magistrate, or a non-Catholic minister to "get married?"* No wonder that as a result no trace of religion remains in after years except the melancholy reflection that a priceless treasure has been lost. Their children use the phrase not uncommon in some parts of the country: "I am a friend of the Catholics, for my father was once a member of that Church" or, "my mother ought to be a Catholic." Expressions of this kind bear sad testimony

against the person leaving the true fold, and tell of an immortal soul bartered to satisfy the cravings of an unholy love. A Catholic who attempts a marriage outside the Church is guilty of a grievous wrong because of the profanation of the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony. His or her marriage is considered null and void in the eyes of the Church, and exclusion from the sacraments and Christian burial is the penalty, unless he or she is repentant and sees to it that the marriage attempted is validated in the presence of a duly authorized priest. Oh, if indifferent Catholics could but understand how awful and terrible it is to be married in mortal sin! What blessings on their home and on their children can they look for?

We shall now close our pastoral letter with an excerpt from the encyclical of our illustrious Pontiff, Pope Pius XI, on Christian Marriage. In regard to the preparation for marriage His Holiness speaks as follows:

It cannot be denied that the basis of a happy wedlock and the ruin of an unhappy one are prepared and set in the souls of boys and girls during the period of childhood and adolescence. There is danger that those who before marriage sought in all things what is theirs, who indulged even their impure desires, will be in the marriage state what they were before; that they will reap that which they have sown; indeed within the home there will be sadness, lamentation, mutual contempt, strifes, estrangements, weariness of common life; and, worst of all, such parties will find themselves left alone with their own unconquered passions. . . .

To the proximate preparation of a good married life belongs very specially the care in choosing a partner. On that depends a great deal whether the forthcoming marriage will be happy or not, since one may be to the other either a great help in leading a Christian life, or, on the other hand, a great danger and hindrance. And so that they will not deplore for the rest of their lives the sorrows arising from an indiscreet marriage, those about to enter into wedlock should carefully deliberate in choosing the person with whom henceforward they must live continually. They should in so deliberating keep before their minds the thought first of God and of the true religion of Christ, then of themselves, of their partner, of the children who come, as also of human and civil society, for which wedlock is as a fountain head. Let them diligently pray for divine help, so that they will make their choice in accordance with Christian prudence, not indeed led by the blind and unrestrained impulse of lust, nor by any desire of riches or other base influence, but by a true and noble love and by a sincere affection toward the future partner; and then let them strive in their married life toward those ends for which the State was constituted by God. Lastly, let them not omit to ask the prudent advice of their parents with regard to the partner and let them regard this advice in no light manner,

in order that by their mature knowledge and experience of human affairs they may guard against a baneful mistake, and on the threshold of matrimony may receive more abundantly the Divine blessing of the Fourth Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother," which is the first Commandment with a promise, "that it may be well with thee and thou mayest be long lived upon the earth."

The True Paulinism

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OF the false idea of Paulinism that marked the German criticism of the later part of the last century it is unnecessary here to speak; of that supposed Paulinism which was contrasted to a supposed Petrinism, although (as Canon Streeter remarks in his *Four Gospels*) it would have been more plausible to find Paul's adversary in James. All this meant forcing the New Testament into the Hegelian mould of thesis, antithesis and synthesis; the root of the matter lay in *a priori* categories and not in the evidence.

The true Paulinism is union with Christ and unity in Christ; as an explicit conception it is gaining ground steadily in the Church, partly as the result of progress in biblical studies, and partly as a secure foundation for that personal devotion to Christ which is always a mark of the Church, but appears to be especially strong at the present time. The study of Holy Writ bears no fairer flower than the Pauline Christology, a simple yet all-embracing synthesis of what Christ is in Himself, of what He is and ought to be in us. It is to this part of Scripture that Catholic scholarship has instinctively turned in the West to search for treasures somewhat neglected in the past, but able to satisfy every quest, because they are in truth the unfathomable riches of Christ Himself. St. Augustine is full of the doctrine of the "Mystical Body," though he does not actually use the term; he presses on to it so quickly and so insistently as even to occasion some difficulty in regard of his teaching the Real Presence. But otherwise this central thought of Paul is not so familiar to the Western Fathers and their successors as to the Eastern

Fathers; all that is essential in the doctrine is there, but is not set forth with the same clearness and emphasis, nor does it appear to the same extent to give life and meaning to the whole. Thus a revival of Augustinian thought might profitably develop this point of view; but for us it is better still to drink deep draughts at the source.

Christ Our Lord, speaking to those who misconstrued His doctrine and were hounding Him to death, did not cast His pearls before swine; He did not work out to the full, so far as we can judge, the full implications of His teaching. Even towards the end of His ministry the Jews were importuning Him to tell them plainly, not whether He claimed to be God, but whether He claimed to be the Messiah; and they did not attain their desire. Christ veiled His full doctrine to some extent, speaking, for example, in parables; He did not wish either to shock the good or to give a handle to the bad, but He steadily led those forward who showed good will. Only at the Last Supper, where He is alone with the Twelve, may He be said to speak freely of man becoming one with Father and Son, and of the work of the Holy Spirit; and we recognize at once the fundamental identity with the thought of Paul, though with an evident difference in the presentation.

In the Johannine report as in the epistles of Paul, and indeed in the Petrine formula also that we are "partakers of the divine nature," we find up to a certain point the language of identity. Our Lord prays that all the faithful may be "one thing, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they too may be in us . . . that they may be one as we are one: I in them and thou in me: that they may be perfected in unity." The Apostle proclaims that "it is no longer I that live, 'tis Christ liveth in me": "for me to live is Christ." Christ is the Head, whose members we are, limbs of His very body; whose life is ours. For the present I desire to do no more than point out how strong are the expressions which indicate unity and identification. In those brought up in the strict Jewish monotheism, or for whom a monotheism no less strict belonged to the very foundations of their whole faith, pantheism was not a danger. Secure upon that side, without need to guard against the vague monism of our own time, St. Paul, like Christ before him, was only concerned to bring out the intimate

union of the believer with the God-man. He was in fact as much and more concerned to press home this unity as Luther was to sever it; it is truly a paradox that Luther should have been thought to bring men nearer to Christ, when his doctrine of imputation (as against imparted grace) set up between Christ and the Christian a chasm that could not be crossed!

The Catholic doctrine, on the other hand, contained both fact and ideal; to a varying extent this unity was a fact in every Christian, but it could always become so to an ever greater extent. According as the soul yields to His sweet wooing, the Saviour can take possession of the whole man more and more, working upon him through His Church from without, while penetrating and permeating him more and more from within. His action is thus theandric, as were His actions in His human life. With His human voice He commanded the cure, the calm of the sea, the devils' departure; with His divine power, in virtue of the Divine Nature common to Him with Father and Spirit, He effected what His words conveyed. And so it was in matters spiritual, in Baptism and forgiveness of sins and Eucharist and the rest; so also it is now, in so far as we must refer to His human nature all that belongs to the Church and the Incarnation, but not in such a way as even to abstract from the Divine Nature. It is by reason of the Incarnation that we follow the Apostle in speaking of Christ as working directly upon the soul; but this is attributed to Him as working through the Holy Spirit, or directly to the Holy Spirit Himself. In actual fact it is the whole Godhead that works spiritual effects in the soul; but in order to develop the thought of Paul to the full we must include those effects in the work of Christ, both because (so far as attribution goes) He imparts the Holy Spirit, and because, in actual fact, He imparts Himself in and with the Holy Spirit. But to this subject we shall return anon.

All this we find in Holy Writ; and the revival of biblical studies has of necessity brought it to the fore. The Pauline epistles, with the Acts for background, occupy a position in the New Testament not unlike that of the prophets in the Old, with the historical books for background; the gospels in some respects may be compared to the Pentateuch. The comparison of course halts in many

respects, but may serve to bring out the very important position in the New Testament of the Apostle of the Gentiles, with whom even the Acts are in their main purpose concerned. And as has been said, this is the most novel and valuable fruit to be derived from the biblical revival, in so far as it may not have been sufficiently appreciated before. It must be admitted that St. Paul's epistles are apt to make rather difficult reading; indeed, we have St. Peter's word for it; needless to say, however, they are not too difficult for the clergy, and with their help the laity may derive great profit also. It was the conviction of the great fruit to be gathered, and of the greater ease with which it might be gathered, that most moved the present writer to join in undertaking the Westminster Version. The present article in its turn has been largely inspired by His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham's article on a proposed revision of the catechism in the May number of the *Clergy Review*, for the changes made would be in the direction of the Pauline synthesis. "Suffer little children to come unto me"; if thus they might learn Christ more easily and more quickly, it would be an immense consolation to the present writer, for he had not hoped that fuller profit might so soon be taken of this divine synthesis in our schools.

But there is another, an even more powerful cause that is bringing to the fore the true Catholic Paulinism; it is the best answer to the Christ-hunger of our time, the most sure and solid foundation for building up the true knowledge and love of our Emmanuel. The fact and the desire of this knowledge and love appear to be in an especial manner marks of our own period of the Church's history; they are built upon frequent communion, itself reinforced by the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and they are the immediate aim of the new feast of Christ the King, with all that centres round that title. Now the Pauline doctrine of our union with Christ adds greatly to our understanding of all these, and gives them a new and deeper meaning. "It is no longer I that live," cries the Apostle, "it is Christ that liveth in me." The Holy Eucharist is the very food of this spiritual life, while the devotion to the Sacred Heart fosters sympathy with Him whose tender compassion is so ill requited, strengthening still more the desire of utter abandonment of self.

The feast and devotion of Christ the King may well be illustrated from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius; St. Ignatius is extremely sober and objective in his devotion, but here a personal trait appears. He was one of the greatest lovers of Our Blessed Lord, conspicuous for his personal love of the Saviour even among the saints, and showing it in many ways, for example, by the name he chose for his order, by his loving visit of the holy places, by his purpose to imitate as closely as possible Our Lord's actual life by a missionary life which should rely on private prayer rather than monastic observance; but when it comes to setting before others this personal devotion, he makes his appeal to that Christian chivalry wherein Spain, we may trust, even today abounds. His loyal devotion to Christ could not but take that form, and indeed the Great War showed how many are ready everywhere to answer such an appeal to generosity. It is a kind of second "foundation" that he is laying in his contemplation of Christ the King, upon which is to be built the remainder of the Exercises. The final consummation, indeed, with so objective a saint could only be the love of God in Himself and for Himself; but to this he leads us, as Paul does, from the thought of Christ ascended. "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth." That "he was rapt to Paradise, and heard utterances unutterable" could not tear Paul from the love of Christ, any more than mystical experience could shake Ignatius' loyalty to his Divine Captain. Such is the religion of the Incarnation, which is as firmly riveted to the manger of Bethlehem as to the throne of the Trinity, because upon both it sees the God-man, come down to the one to lift us up to the other. For Paul Incarnation and Atonement were inseparable in his one supreme thought of Jesus Christ.

And yet it is an evident fact that the Apostle does not linger upon the details of Christ's human life. They were already familiar to his readers, for whom he had words of more urgent import; and they were not essential to the setting forth of "my gospel," that interpretation and summing up of all things in Christ, that synthesis which it was his duty to preach to the world. But the Incarnation itself, is at the very centre of that synthesis.

What then is the synthesis? "It is no longer I that live, 'tis Christ liveth in me." The Christian lives in Christ, and Christ lives in the Christian; and this is true, not only in what concerns his inward and individual life (as is most clear from the words quoted), but also of his outward and corporate life. With this latter, indeed, we may begin, because it is more easily understood, and because it may be said to bring us into more direct relation with the God-man as such, in the sense that the inward and spiritual life of the soul is due to the common action of the Blessed Trinity, and even in attribution belongs to the Holy Ghost.

Christ is the Head, the Church is the Body, the individual members of the Church make up the several parts of the body. The root-idea seems to be human marriage, wherein husband and wife, according to Gen. ii. 24, become one flesh, and are therefore treated as one body, but a body wherein the husband is head, as being (according to the very phrase we are wont to use) the head of the family. Hence to St. Paul it is one and the same thing to say (or quite definitely to imply, for he does not say it in so many words) that the Church is the bride of Christ, and to say that she is His body; but he prefers the latter phrase, as signifying a closer unity and common life. Being His body, she is one with Him, and from Him comes her whole activity, her whole life and growth and development.

It is in this way, therefore, that we must look upon the Church. Christ has left with her a threefold power, of teaching, governing and sanctifying; and in the exercise of each of these activities we must recognize, not a mere human person or institution, but Christ Himself using human means to effect His own purpose. It is not necessary here to treat scientifically of the threefold power, which will be found set forth in any adequate treatise or instruction upon the Church; all that I aim at presenting is the Pauline aspect of the Church, as part of the Pauline synthesis. It is, of course, at bottom the ordinary Catholic doctrine, but interpreted with peculiar power and harmony.

Protestants speak of the Church as coming between us and Christ, as though we had to go first to the Church and then, as it were, be passed on by her to Christ. But that is not the Catholic view, and least of all St. Paul's. Even in matters external, it is Christ acting through and in the

Church. "He that heareth you heareth me." Christ is with His Church to the end, even as the head is with the body; the authority is His, the organization of government is His, the direction of all lawful activity is His. Our primary obedience is to Christ, and only in a secondary sense is directed to those whom He chooses to represent Him. The doctrine likewise that reaches us is Christ's, far more fully guaranteed to be such than is the wisdom of any individual commands; the ultimate guarantee is infallibility, but revealed truth is conveyed to us through many sure channels, and it is the living Christ who is teaching us in the living Church. Most of all is He present and active in the Church's ministry, wherein it is in the very person of Christ that the minister, priest or lay, confers the sacraments, and that the priest offers the adorable sacrifice of the Mass. We can never love the Church as Christ would have us love her until we contemplate her as alive with His life and active with His divine energy. We recognize the human element; it may, alas, be all too clearly in evidence. But through and beyond that, we behold the God-man working in and through and for the Church, fulfilling Himself in her as she is fulfilled in Him. But for Protestants all must needs be human, not merely in the Catholic Church but in their own organization; for what possible guarantee have they that they are getting hold of Christ at all? Certainly not the fancies of a preacher who upon his own showing is well-nigh blaspheming if he calls his own very human discourse the word of God.

"But if anyone hath not the Spirit of Christ, that man is not of Christ." There is an inward aspect of the Christian's union with Christ that is still more important, inasmuch as what is outward is for the sake of what is inward. This inward union is partly fact and partly ideal. St. Paul generally means by "faith" a living faith, which has its proper effects in sanctifying grace and charity; whence also he is wont to speak of "faith" as "obedience." In the same concrete way he is wont to presuppose in his writing that union with the Church in her outward teaching and government and ministry brings with it that inward union with Christ towards which her ministrations are directed. No doubt it usually did so; and in his eagerness to set forth the Christian life in all its fulness, he does not stop to work

out all the possibilities of the case, the possibility of grace without external membership of the Church, or of external membership without grace. In that sense he is setting forth an ideal, not (alas!) sheer fact, but it would be a terrible perversion of his meaning to suppose that he does not teach the absolute obligation of belonging visibly and externally to the external organization of the visible Church. In this regard the expression "Mystical Body," or at all events the term "Mystical," has been greatly abused, though no doubt often enough in good faith; it is not a Pauline term, and is so open to misinterpretation at the present time that one almost regrets that it ever came into use. It is convenient enough, however, if rightly understood, since we must evidently make it clear that we are not speaking of Christ's *physical* Body.

For St. Paul, however, the ideal in the fact is "one body and one spirit," or, as we should say, "one soul and one body"; a fact, in so far as there really is one body, quickened by one Spirit, but an ideal in so far as the Spirit does not always have even that effect which is necessary for the grace and salvation of the individual. St. Paul was too much concerned to press home the big things themselves to work out their niceties; nevertheless we see clearly that he realized that Christians could sin, and sin grievously, and we see also at times, though not so easily, that he understood that those outside the Church could be in a state of grace. Such passages occur, for example, in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It must be remembered that mortal sin does not necessarily destroy the supernatural habits of faith and hope, so that the supernatural bond uniting the soul to God is not altogether severed; and in the same way excommunication, to which St. Paul had ready recourse, does not completely destroy the outward bond of Church membership. Such weakening of internal or external union, however, with both of which St. Paul was familiar, would of themselves point to further possibilities.

But it is the internal unity in its fulness, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, that is the Apostle's chief theme. This, too, as has been said, is for the Apostle the Christ-life of the Christian; yet he treats it in such a way as to prepare the way with St. John for the more direct attribution of it to the Holy Ghost. If we were to attempt some

distinction, we should have to say that St. Paul tends to assign what is more outward to Christ, such as all that belongs to the Church, and what is more inward to the Holy Ghost, such as all that belongs to grace; but this is a distinction which the Apostle himself is far from observing accurately. Again and again he lets us see that Christ Himself is within us; and so for that matter does St. John. It was in His human nature that Christ instituted Church and sacraments and all that works upon us from without, and which therefore is rightly reserved to Him, but it is in unity with the other two Persons of the Blessed Trinity that He accomplishes the inward effect. We may well ascribe it all to Him, as we do the miracle, and we do so truly; but we must not exclude the other Persons, and we must remember that in formal attribution the inward spiritual effect belongs to the Holy Ghost.

Paul loves nevertheless to see Christ everywhere, within as well as without! That transformation of the soul which is sanctifying grace, that direction and impulse upon intellect and will, that presentation of Himself by God to the soul as the all-satisfying and all-embracing object of intellect and will—all this and more must be understood as the Christ-life of the soul, Christ dwelling and acting therein as powerfully as the soul of its own free will allows Him to dominate and penetrate and permeate it, until it can say, "It is no longer I that live, it is Christ that liveth in me." Death to all else but Christ! Death it truly was, when the soul renounced all else to follow Him, when it doffed the old Adam to don the new, when it renounced its old life and all its ways so utterly that Paul speaks of it as thereby a new creature by a new creation. So in effect it is, but it is to be so still more; the soul must advance towards more perfect crucifixion, to more whole-hearted surrender, in order that Christ may freely be offered the more total mastery. Absolute control, alas, man never offers Him; perhaps Our Blessed Lady was the only mere creature for whom to receive a grace was to accept it in its fulness. If even heroic sanctity may fall short of this, much more may virtue of a more ordinary type. For all, therefore, remain vast fields yet to conquer—and in the consciousness of that very fact the cleansing pain of ineffective love and the sure safeguard of humility.

Such is the magnificent synthesis of St. Paul, though all too inadequately expressed; but it remains to show, if still inadequately, that it *is* a synthesis, the one pure, simple and gleaming truth whereof all other doctrines may be reckoned aspects or facets. If we look Godward, as at the very beginning we should, we understand at once how fundamental to this synthesis are the doctrines of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation. God alone can deify, as St. Thomas says, so that Our Lord could not make us partakers of the Divine Nature by adoption if He did not possess that Nature as His own. To accomplish His work, He must be both truly divine and truly human; and in that double pre-requisite of the divine economy we have the Incarnation. Then we ask, how can He be God? And we at once perceive how becoming it was that the mystery of the Blessed Trinity should be revealed as the background of the Incarnation. He comes from the Father, remaining one with Him; He becomes not merely one body but one soul with us, in communicating to us His own Spirit, "the Spirit of Jesus"—and in communicating the Spirit He communicates Himself.

Our place in the external and organized life of the Church we have already seen to be due to our being members of His Body, with a true function in the life of the whole. Such indeed should be the life of the family, the life of the State, the common life of all States in regard of their mutual relations, the life of all mankind; neither individuals nor States can shake off their mutual dependence and responsibility, wherein they should find the moral and spiritual counterpart in their inward and outward membership of the Mystical Body of Christ. The sacrificial and sacramental life of man is evidently naught but Christ, who still offers up to God through His priests that death to which the Incarnation gives infinite value, and still administers through His priests the sacramental means of answering grace, and most of all Himself as Eucharistic food.

Upon the side of conduct also, therefore, and not merely of doctrine, Christ is thus our all in all, helping forward and satisfying the will and heart no less than the intellect. To Him all things move, man by his conscious aim, but all things else as being designed by God to help forward man to Christ; indirectly Christ is their goal like-

wise, summing up all things in Himself. To the Apostle He was not merely the still and hidden voice of inner grace, but revealed Himself openly to impart direction and encouragement, establishing thus a familiarity founded (no doubt) upon the mystical state. To the Apostle, therefore, the thought of Jesus was everything; and from his frequent use of the name we may infer (though without complete certainty) that he was wont to repeat it often, and to find in such simplified thought and prayer all the unfathomable riches of Christ, as far as it was given him to make them his own. Such a practice is the main feature of the Jesus Psalter and some other devotions, which may teach us in like manner a loving familiarity with the sacred name; the more we learn with Paul to put into it, the more also we shall find in the simple use of it. It is not in the abundance and novelty of thoughts that progress in prayer truly lies, but in the grip that one or two essential thoughts, such as that of Jesus, have upon us, in the meaning they have for us, in the power they have to dominate us.

We find it difficult to realize the historical circumstances of Paul's work, especially upon its Jewish side; for on the one hand he observed faithfully the Mosaic Law and the traditional customs of his nation, while on the other hand he fought vigorously in doctrine and practice against the imposition of such a yoke upon his Gentile converts. He fought so well and won such utter victory that we cannot easily picture the battle. All this belongs in a certain sense to the negative side of his work; it was ephemeral precisely because it removed for ever the barriers to the full development of Christianity. But we can understand and make our own the positive content of his mind and work, and indeed it is our duty and glorious privilege to profit thereby. We may sum it up in conclusion in terms of the *pleroma*, the "fulness" alike of Christ and of ourselves. Christ reaches His uttermost fulness in His Mystical Body, when His Personality, so to speak, covers more and more all His elect, whom He incorporates into Himself on earth and hereafter. At the end of time, to use the Pauline phrase, He will have attained the full measure of His stature. And we attain our own fulness in Christ, being developed beyond all natural power or need unto deification, so as to be one with God, through our union and unity with Christ our Lord.

Nationality: Its Place

Statement of the Catholic Union of International Studies. Concluded from last issue.

X

It is the State which, in its quality of a moral entity, is of itself directly charged with the duty of ensuring by its own initiative and personal responsibility, conditions favorable to the normal development of the nationals subject to its sovereignty.

XI

The end towards which the State moves demands the organization of an international regime which will guarantee international order and common good. It is the function of an organized international society to exercise juridical and moral control over the activity of States especially in the matter of nationality.

XII

With a view to ensuring respect for those obligations which the existence of nationalities has imposed on States and on national groups, it is desirable that such rights and duties should be expressed and given a juridical guarantee and that they should be embodied in the legislation of States.

The guaranteeing under this new form of this part of the Rights of Man is a moral obligation which demands at the present day the free action of States as well as the regulating and coordinating influence of the League of Nations. To the latter in particular it belongs to assist in causing the rights and duties of States and national groups gradually to be embodied in the positive law, both national and international.

It is greatly to be desired that representatives of different bodies interested in the problem of protecting the rights of nationality (the philosophy of law, public law, social and political philosophy, and ethics) should devote themselves to the doctrinal elaboration of a Declaration of Human Rights of which the rights of nationals are an integral part. These rights must, in fact, be defined philosophically, in order that they may be protected juridically.